

This is the only juvenal specimen in the AMNH series. It has not undergone its first prebasic moult. The crown, mantle, back, rump and tail are uniformly dark olive-brown. Lores are very dark blackish-brown. The chin is white. The throat, breast and flanks are brown. Feathers of the belly are off-white, becoming darker towards the tips, which have light brown terminal edges, giving a slightly mottled appearance. The undertail coverts are tan. Wings are dark olive-brown without paler edging to the coverts or remiges. Overall, this juvenal plumage resembles a dark version of the *Pachycephala*- and *Poecilodryas*-type.

No soft part colours are given on the label but M. LeCroy (*in litt.*) gives the following description: "from the skin it appears that the bill was quite dark with yellow at the gape and on the upper edge of the lower mandible at the base. The legs and feet appear as though they were yellowish or fleshy, much lighter than in the adult".

There are no juvenals of *P. hattamensis* in the AMNH collection; none has yet been described.

Acknowledgements: I wish to thank Mary LeCroy for the information on the soft part colours. While at the American Museum of Natural History my work was supported by a Frank M. Chapman Memorial Grant.

19 August 1981

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Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* breeding in Oman, eastern Arabia

The breeding of the Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, only once previously reported anywhere in Arabia, was proved in the Sultanate of Oman, eastern Arabia, by the discovery (by MRB) of 2 downy chicks, 2-3 weeks old, on a tree nest in the central desert region on 21 January 1981. On 8 February 1981 MDG found one chick in a second nest about 110 km to the southwest, where MRB had seen 2 fledged young perched above the same nest on 3 April 1980 (MDG & MRB *in press*, *Sandgrouse*).

In the first nest one chick was seen being harried by its sibling and was found dead on 30 January (P. Harris pers. comm.), the survivor fledging on 4 March. A backward projection (R. F. Porter *in litt.*) suggests the cycle: courtship and nest-building late September to early November, first egg laid very approximately 18 November, first chick hatched very approximately 1 January. From these and our other sightings in 1980-81, and from 4 other unoccupied nests, *A. chrysaetos* would appear to be a scarce breeding resident in the desert and semi-desert of Oman, wherever there are suitable trees (such as *Prosopis cineraria*) and prey (mostly hare *Lepus capensis*).

The only other published report of the Golden Eagle breeding in the Arabian Peninsula was of one chick and one egg (75 × 60 mm) removed from a cliff nest near Jeddah, SW Saudi Arabia, on 6 February 1948 (Meinertzhagen (1949), *Ibis* 91: 465-482; G. B. Popov *in litt.*). Popov's

photograph of 12 March 1948 shows the chick about 6 weeks old (R. F. Porter *in litt.*). M. P. Walters (pers. comm.) recently re-examined one of the 2 eggs collected by B. Thomas (1931, *Geogr. J.* 78: 209–242) from a tree nest in the Hadh Muzariq sands of the Empty Quarter of Saudi Arabia at about 20°44'N, 51°30'E in mid-January, and considers that at 77.4 x 55.9 mm it is too big for Abyssinian Tawny Eagle *A. r. raptor*, as suggested by Kinnear (1931, *Ibis* (13)1: 698–701), and, excluding Imperial Eagle *A. heliaca* on account of the latter's more northerly breeding range, it is almost certainly an egg of the Golden Eagle, apparently the first evidence of breeding in Arabia.

Regarding distribution elsewhere, M. C. Jennings, who kindly gave us details of his researches for 'The Birds of Saudia Arabia: a Check-list' (1981), considers the species to be a rare breeding resident in Hejaz and Northern Hejaz. In North Yemen, Thiollay & Duhautois reported display and they suspected breeding (*Oiseau* 46(3), 1976: 261–271). In Sinai a chick was removed from a cliff nest on 4 March 1927 (Meinertzhagen (1930), *Nicoll's Birds of Egypt*, Vol. 2: 385). In Israel in 1981 there were about 15 pairs (Y. Leshem *in litt.*). This evidence supports the probability that the Golden Eagle is a scarce resident breeder in the desert and semi-desert of Arabia.

10 December 1981

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BOOKS RECEIVED

Mackworth-Praed, C. W. & Grant, C. H. B. 1981. *African Handbook of Birds*. Series 2. *Birds of the Southern Third of Africa*, Vols. 1 & 2, with Publisher's note and a Biography of the authors. Longman: London. Vol. 1. Pp. i–xxvii, 1–661 + Index. £30. Vol. 2. Pp. i–x, 1–712 + Index. £30. Series 3. *Birds of West Central and Western Africa*, Vols. 1 & 2, with Publisher's note and a biography of the authors. Longman: London. Vol. 1. Pp. i–xxxii, 1–639 + Index. £30. Vol. 2. Pp. i–x, 1–774 + Index. £30.

Welcome reprints of the 1962/63 and 1970/73 original editions respectively of these classical volumes, together with their coloured and other illustrations. Series 1 is noticed in *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 100(3): 206.

Elgood, J. H. 1981. *The Birds of Nigeria*—an annotated check-list. Pp. 1–246. British Ornithologists' Union, c/o Zoological Society, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY. £14 (£10 to members).

The fourth in the series of avifaunal lists being published by the BOU. 831 species are treated, each being given its status and preferred habitat, distribution and movements, and breeding dates if known. The introductory chapters include a review of past literature and discuss the Nigerian environment, migration (Palearctic and intra-African), breeding seasons and other subjects. There are 4 Appendix analyses, a gazetteer, a comprehensive list of references and indices of genera and of English names.